

The Icelandic Canadian

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THE ICELANDIC CANADIAN

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CHRISTMAS

For nearly two thousand years we have commemorated this occasion cause on this day of days a Child was born. He was brought up in the surroundings of a small provincial town. His friends and associates were common, everyday people. This Carpenter from Nazareth associated but little with the proud, priestly caste that under Roman suzerainty controlled the Pale of his day.

He preached a doctrine of love. But He was not satisfied with mere words. He supplemented His talking with good deeds.

Time and again His doctrine has been analyzed. The centuries have turned their searchlight of criticism upon His teachings. But the cold, analytical mind of reason has revealed no fundamental weakness therein.

The Man from Nazareth understood human nature as no one else understood it. He knew that all human beings are much alike, "that the color of lady and Judy O'Grady are sisters under the skin". He had a keen insight into the strength and frailty of the human heart. He knew that men and women either mar or mar their happiness and that of their associates by the proper or improper development of their faculties.

He preached a doctrine of faith. He knew that a man without faith is like a pilot-less skiff, sailing unchartered seas.

But faith is a word that has a more extensive meaning than is commonly supposed. One aspect of faith is the conviction that the guiding genius of creation is benevolent. Life would be somewhat meaningless if we thought that the wonderful Universe of ours were but a child of chance, tossed like an autumn leaf hither and thither by the caprice of the wind. We look at the wonders of the heavens at night, the myriad of stars that dot the sky. Perhaps, the realization dawns upon us that each star compared to a football makes our earth the size of a marble, that our little world in the vastness of the universe is like a dust particle in the ocean's mighty expanse. At such a time it is difficult not to have faith.

The study of science reveals that the machinery of the universe runs in accordance with laws that never change. The earth in its journey around the sun is never a split second ahead of schedule, never late. Each cause must have a logical effect. All this cannot but suggest that some supreme genius guides our destiny.

To have faith we must be convinced of the fundamental goodness of mankind. In so many cases, alleged wickedness is but a difference in points of view. Quite often, when we hear the other fellow's side of the story, we are convinced of his good faith. No matter how mistaken their methods may be, most people have good intentions. The world's troubles are due mostly to misunderstandings. The whole structure of civilization is based upon faith in our fellow man.

But faith in a Supreme Being and in the fundamental goodness of the human race is not enough. Man's existence would be but hollow if he did not have faith in the capability of mankind of ultimately achieving a lofty destiny. That may be a strange statement to make at a time like this, but when we consider our ancestors leading a precarious existence, cowering in superstitious fear at the rumble of thunder, we know that mankind has made progress and will continue to do so. That statement may appear even more strange at the present when mankind appears to be facing a third and, perhaps, the final ill-destroying World War. We must have faith.

Longfellow's "Excelsior" symbolizes mankind's heroic struggle against overwhelming odds, and his climbing upwards towards even greater heights. The Latin word, "excelsior", means "higher":

The shades of night were falling fast,
As through an Alpine village passed
A youth who bore, 'mid snow and ice,
A banner with the strange device,
Excelsior!

His brow was sad; his eye beneath, flashed like a falchion from his sheath,

And like a silver clarion rung
The accents of that unknown tongue,
Excelsior!

"Try not the pass!", the old man said;
"Dark lowers the tempest overhead,
The roaring torrent is deep and wide!"
And still the clarion voice replied,
Excelsior!

Finally we must have faith in the ultimate successful outcome of our endeavours. There can be no purposeful activity without this faith.

He preached a doctrine of hope. Faith sometimes fails, but hope rises eternal in the human breast. Hope is like a star that shines all alone on a dark night, guiding the weary traveller on his way.

"Soft as the voice of an angel,
breathing
a lesson unheard,
Hope with her gentle persuasion
whispers her comforting word,
Wait till the darkness is over,
Wait till the tempest is done,
Hope for the sunshine to-morrow
after the shower is gone!

If in the dusk of the twilight,
dim be the region afar,
Will not the deepening darkness
brighten the glimmering star?
Then, when the night is upon us,
why should the heart sink away?
When the dark midnight is over,
watch for the breaking of day."

Lastly, He preached a doctrine of charity. 'And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity', said the apostle. This is the quality that is most difficult for us to attain, for charity involves doing unto others, as we would have others do unto us. It entails the

ability to see the other fellow's viewpoint and the willingness to see the beam that is in our own eye before we see the mote in our brother's. This is the quality that the world of today so sadly needs, for just as hate breeds hate, and revenge engenders revenge, so charity begets charity.

These are the ideals that the far-away Judean hills heard long ago, but heeded not. This is the doctrine that two

thousand successive Christmases I only partially succeeded in imparting to a somewhat sceptical and indifferent mankind. This is the message that is heard once again this Christmas amid the deepening shadow of a troubled world. Above the confused noises of senseless strife echoes re-echoes its clarion call,

"EXCELSIOR!"



In the Editor's Confidence

The Editorial, "The Sovereign Power of Nations and its Limitations", which appeared in the autumn issue, 1956, of **The Icelandic Canadian** has aroused widespread interest. The chief merit of the Editorial, the author was told in a personal interview in Ottawa, lay in the fact that the line of argument applied equally to all the nations of the Free World who felt it necessary to form some alliance or understanding for their own security.

It will be a source of pride to the readers and supporters of **THE ICELANDIC CANADIAN** to know that the Canadian Department of External Affairs, of which Hon. Lester B. Pearson is minister, has ordered two hundred copies of the article.



It is encouraging to Canadians and, indeed, to all who believe in the free-world philosophy of life to know how strongly the Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs advocates the strengthening of co-operation and unity within the free Nations of the Western World. The American Assembly, composed of some sixty leaders

in government, business, labor, industry and education, met at Algonquin House, a part of Columbia University, November 15-18, 1956. The guest speaker at the opening session was Hon. L. B. Pearson, the first citizen of the United States ever invited to address one of those four gatherings. Part of his address, reported by Special N.Y.H.T., follows:

"In my own mind there is no absolute necessity of strengthening co-operation and unity within the Western coalition generally."

"This means that action by one member state which affects directly and importantly, the other members, should only be taken after collective discussion and agreement, unless the situation of extreme emergency makes this impossible. This applies to the Far East, the Middle East and to Western Europe and the Atlantic area."

The foregoing, readers will note, exactly the principle, advocated in the article, "The Sovereign Power of Nations and its Limitations."

Björn Sigurbjörnsson:

Soil Conservation in Iceland

The history of the Icelandic people is marked by a continuous war, not against other nations of the world, nor amongst their own people, but against the elements—a struggle for existence on an isolated island in the North Atlantic Ocean.

This struggle has been long and hard, and its heavy tolls have often threatened the very existence of civilization on the island. Such hardship has, however, bred a vigorous and progressive nation which fights for more than a mere existence and is determined to lead a good and prosperous life on the island, and intends to use all the tools of modern mechanization and scientific knowledge to maintain its standard of living on an equal level with other civilized nations of the world.

As is well known to most of the present readers, Iceland is situated in the subarctic, its northern shores touching the arctic circle. Considering its geographical location only, one would expect the island to consist exclusively of tundras and glaciers. Fortunately, however, due to the northward upflow of the Gulfstream, the climate, instead of being of a subarctic nature, is rather that of a cold temperate oceanic type with cool summers and mild winters, the mean temperature of the coldest month actually being warmer than in New York. Due to this fact glaciers cover only the highest mountains, and tundras are but rarely found and only upon the high central

plateau of the island. The lowlands, mainly along the shoreline, represent extensive grassland areas on which livestock is raised: cattle, sheep and horses.

Thus the climate does not exhibit the extremes in temperatures that we know so well in the continental climate of central North America. It is rather the changeable nature and unsteadiness of the Icelandic climate that causes concern to the farmer. High winds and often excessive rainfall aggravate his concern and present difficulties in making hay for the overwintering livestock. The alternative freezing and thawing, so typical of the Icelandic climate, is hard on vegetation and, furthermore, induces excessive weathering of the rock and soil, and in the absence of a protective vegetational cover this will result in active erosion, especially in the cold highlands.

Iceland is one of the most active volcanic areas in the world. Numerous eruptions have taken place in recent times. Approximately 130 volcanic eruptions have been recorded in Icelandic history and at the present time eruptions take place about once in every five years. As a result of this, ten percent of the country is covered by lava that has flowed since glaciation time, and two percent by lava that has flowed during historical times. Much damage has resulted from this lava flow but the consequences of the fall of tephra and pumice have been much

more serious. Not only has it killed people and animals but it has caused serious injury to vegetation, leaving the ground exposed to the forces of erosion.

Glaciers have played their part in the forming of this country. They grind and scrape their bedrocks, and amounts of gravel, sand and clay down to the lowlands, and there in the much slower current of the rivers these materials settle and in that way vast areas of sand plains have been formed. This sand, together with loess and dust resulting from the weathering of the highlands, is the main source of the enormous quantities of sand, loess and dust blown by the wind. Much of this material is carried out to the sea, but some is retained by the vegetation and in these areas there is a rapid building up of soil. Thus there are two forces, one tearing down and the other building up, which, if not interfered with, maintain a fair equilibrium between themselves.

According to the sagas, at the time when Iceland was settled there were birch forests throughout the country from the mountains to the shorelines. The settlers brought with them the first herbivorous animals to graze in Iceland. They let the livestock graze in the forests, used the wood for buildings, tools and fuel. This, within a short period of time, resulted in the destruction of the birch, so that of all the birch that in ancient times covered the greater part of the lowlands and the lower mountain slopes, only about 400 square miles are left. Heavy grazing of the native vegetation, grass and heath, further aggravated the situation, leaving the country vulnerable and exposed to the natural forces of erosion. With the climate gradually cooling from the time of

settlement until the beginning of the century this combination of unfavorable conditions had resulted in extensive damage to the native range-
haylands and the country as a whole.

Due to political reasons, a foreign government, a trade monopoly, and other grievances, which will not be discussed here, the Icelanders could do nothing to improve the situation or apply remedies. As a matter of fact this combination of natural disasters and adverse political conditions had reduced the country and its population to a state of misery which reached its climax in the latter part of the eighteenth century.

As soon as Iceland began to regain control over its affairs and after the abolition of the trade monopoly, the people began to realize that if they were to subsist in their country, they must live in accordance with natural conditions. Instead of aiding the natural destructive forces, they must compensate for their necessary interference with the natural equilibrium by applying protection to eroding areas, rehabilitating the eroded and destroyed lands. This work was not started until in the early part of this century with the establishment of the Conservation Service of Iceland in 1907.

When the work was started there was no time for experimentation; the situation was grave and called for immediate action. Some of the primary objectives were to establish fences around the most sensitive areas to afford protection, construct shelterbelts of stones, and start seeding a native "soil conservation grass" the sea lyme grass or melgras. This grass, which thrives only in blowing sand, covering it, thus checking the drift, and sending its extensive root system into the sand, is a very useful tool in



The result of 10 years of protection against overgrazing at Meðaland in Skaftafellssýsla

soil conservation work. Its history is, however, much older. Growing naturally it has provided a valuable resistance against the eroding sands throughout the centuries. In addition it was used as a cereal grain in many parts of the country, providing flour for bread and feed for livestock. Its roots also served as a strong material for the making of harness and other equipment, a practice that unintentionally was responsible for the destruction of vast areas of land, especially in south-east Iceland.

In 1920 ten reclamation areas had been established consisting of fenced-in enclosures; the fences by that time totalled some 24 miles and encircled an area of about four sections. By 1954 the number of reclamation areas had increased to fifty-three and the fences totalled almost 500 miles and the area within the fences consisted of 350 square miles. These fences afford protection against grazing, and such serve a very useful purpose. In some areas, especially where erosion is only in its initial stages, such fencing is sufficient to bring the land back to a grass cover, as the adjacent land provides a sufficient supply of

seed which is blown into the eroded sites. In other places this is not adequate and control can be gained only by seeding with grasses, such as sea lime grass, brome grass, fescues, Timothy, and others, and applying fertilizers liberally. In some areas where drifting is very severe this may not prove sufficient as the strong winds and the drifting soil carry away any seed that is put in the ground. In such areas shelter is required against the wind. During earlier periods of the conservation work, walls of stones were used, but later corrugated iron, and recently movable boards of lumber are used to provide shelter and a safe seedbed. After the seedlings have become well established these boards are removed and set up in other areas where shelter is needed.

The Soil Conservation Service headquarters are located at Gunnarsholt in Rangárvallasýsla, not far from the famous volcano Hekla. Gunnarsholt was formerly a farmstead situated in the midst of several types of destructive erosion forces. The lava from Hekla is seen from the farm some two hundred yards away; extensive areas



Gunnarsholt, headquarters of the Soil Conservation Service of Iceland;
Mt. Hekla in the background.

around the farm are exposed to drifting sand and much of the land had been reduced to a desert-like sand waste. Due to soil erosion the farmstead itself had been moved and reconstructed three times. This location thus provided an ideal spot to start the soil conservation work. On this farm and in its vicinity some 37,000 acres have been fenced in and an increasing amount of the waste land has been brought under vegetational cover. The formerly barren lands around Gunnarsholt now carry two hundred and fifty head of cattle and a few hundred sheep. Viewing these surroundings from one of the hills or mountains around presents an interesting sight. On one side can be seen the fruitless struggle against the elements, the black sand and gravel constituting a menace to the adjacent farmlands; on the other side green fields of vigorously growing grass, producing three to four tons per acre of good quality hay, and at the same time providing a covering to combat the forces of erosion. Such developments are becoming increas-

ingly evident throughout the erosion areas and there are good grounds for hope that the time will come when this work will have been carried to complete success, and farming practice in Iceland will have met the development and an equilibrium reached once more. But there will be a long time before this is realized.

The Icelanders are few in number and have little means. There is a great need for experimentation and research. We need new and better varieties of plants in the fight against erosion and for the subsequent utilization of reclaimed land. We need extensive studies on the grazing capacity of Icelandic pasture and range land in order to know what stocking rate is allowable without exposing the ground to erosion again. We also need studies on the proper management of the reclaimed areas and range lands in Iceland. We need research to develop better and faster methods of erosion control, research to establish the best methods of fertilizing and reseeding in pasture and range programs; we

research to guide us in every step in the soil conservation work and in the management of reclaimed areas.

This need has, of course, been realized by Icelandic authorities and initial steps have already been taken to meet this need. The present Head of the Soil Conservation Service, Mr. Páll Sveinsson, a graduate of the University of Minnesota and the Utah State Agricultural College, and a former employee of the U.S.D.A. Soil Conservation Service, carried out some research in Iceland for the SCS before becoming its director. Through the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations an expert on soil conservation and range management, Mr. J. B. Campbell of Swift Current in Saskatchewan, was sent to Iceland in 1954 and again in 1956, to study problems pertaining to erosion control and range management, and to suggest possible ways of combatting the problems and outline a program of research.

The writer had the privilege of working with Mr. Campbell last summer on his assignment in Iceland and to study some of the problems. We travelled around the erosion areas and the places where the SCS is at work. In co-operation with personnel of the University Research Institute in Iceland we started to line up some experiments that seemed urgent. These included, among others, fenced-in enclosures on eroded and eroding sites; applying fertilizers and seedings, in protected versus unprotected plots; grazing tests to provide information about suitable pasture management; establishment of a nursery with various selections of native sea lime grass and

fertilization of small plots in various areas.

The progress made by the SCS was most encouraging and some of the results were remarkable. For example, on a large expansion of sand on the south coast of Iceland, which has been completely eroded for a long time, a sort of a community pasture was established last year. This involved fencing 250 acres of the sand, fertilizing and seeding with grass in 1955 and repeated fertilization in 1956. Exceeding our most optimistic hopes, grass vegetation covered the whole area in 1956 and produced enough pasture to provide for 1300 sheep and lambs throughout the summer. This has been most encouraging and has stimulated further development on the sand, and will, no doubt, also stimulate the interest of the farmers in the conservation work.

Hopes are bright at present and the Icelandic government and the Head of the SCS are going ahead to expand this program of conservation and rehabilitation which is such a vital part in the progress and prosperity of the Icelandic nation.

The war against the elements on this northern island is being fought now as at all times before, but more vigorously. This will be a very long war and it may never end, but it encourages its soldiers to know that they are gaining new strongholds every day by the vigorous alliance of scientific knowledge through research and experimentation and it strengthens them in their conviction that they are fighting for increased prosperity for their country and an ultimate victory for their nation.

THE RULE OF LAW AND THE CANADIAN PROCESS

By THE HONOURABLE STUART S. GARSON, Q.C., MINISTER OF JUSTICE

The following are extracts from a timely address delivered by Hon. S. N. Garson, Canada's Minister of Justice, at a dinner meeting of the Canada Club, held in the Royal Alexandra Hotel, Winnipeg, November 14, 1956. The Minister's exposition on the rule of law will find ready acceptance by Icelanders everywhere and his interpretation of the Canadian integrating process will meet with a ready response in the thoughts and sentiments of all Canadians and Americans of Icelandic extraction. —Editor.

It would seem that since most of your readers have come to Canada there has hardly been a day go by in which your newspapers and others have not recorded events which point to the deep chasm which divides the un-free political systems from the free. Fresh evidence has become available in the last few weeks of what it means to nations that have to live under the principles of Karl Marx. These principles vehemently repudiated "bourgeois morality" and religion, both of which are predicated on the principle of the inner conviction and personal morality of the individual. Hence Marx implicitly accepted the rightness of external direction of the individual by the State.

Lenin in his turn insisted that everything that furthered the revolution was moral; everything which hindered it was immoral; that any means, no matter how frightful, was justified by the externally-imposed ends. It is therefore not surprising we now have from leading Communists who were formerly intimate colleagues of Stalin recent testimony which proves that his monolithic state of organized injustice and terror is a grim warning to the remaining free peoples of the world of the importance of their own belief in the moral and spiritual prin-

ciples of freedom. We have seen just within the last few days, for example in Poland and Hungary, how thousands of citizens of these countries valued the political freedom, which Canadians take as a matter of course, as being more precious than life itself

This rule of law of which I speak implies a concept of justice implausibly hostile to the cynical doctrines that might makes right which rules the societies which are directed from the top and from within. In the main the foundation of a rule of law is general acceptance by all citizens of certain moral principles which it is the purpose of the law to bring to bear upon the relations between man and man and between man and state. All totalitarian groups repudiate these principles. However bitterly they may fight each other, all of them are in rebellion against the rule of law of the free society. Underlying the doctrines of all of these totalitarian groups, whether they be Fascists, Nazis or Communists, is the same fundamental assumption that men shall be governed not by law but by power. They do not believe in government by the people, by the people and for the people. They have rejected the idea that there is a law which is super-

to tyrants, potentates, magnates, majorities and mobs.

But it seems to me that it is not enough that we are opposed in political theory to these totalitarian groups. Nor is it enough that we acknowledge the rule of law. What is most important of all is that we personally possess the outlook and that we collectively possess the institutions which make sure that in our daily life the rule of law will to a reasonable degree be effectively enforced and observed. For when we seek a society whose members will render justice to one another, and to their government, which in turn will be just to them, we have to face the fact that there will be some who do not wish to render justice to others. We must pass laws to compel from this minority the best substitute for justice that laws can enforce. Granted that we must not be so naively preoccupied with loving kindness and tolerance that we fail to pass such laws as are required, and to provide the practical means by which they can be effectively enforced. But in so doing we must not make the opposite mistake of thinking that it is possible to achieve perfect justice by enacting and depending upon written laws. In order that laws be effective in practice, there must be added to them an adequate tolerance and loving kindness or charity which usually only those possess who believe in a moral order. Our purpose should be to achieve the golden mean between undue reliance upon tolerance and loving kindness on the one hand and undue reliance on the other hand upon the quite mistaken idea that we can achieve perfect justice, or even tolerance, by passing and enforcing laws. And it is at this point that the value of a free parliamentary system becomes apparent. One of the

great virtues of the parliamentary system which we in Canada have inherited from the United Kingdom is that it has achieved this golden mean to a greater extent than it has heretofore been achieved. And how has it been achieved? By what might seem to some impatient idealists the rather pedestrian development of the common law throughout the centuries, making such improvements from time to time as the improving temper and morals and spiritual enlightenment of the citizens would accept and support.

This practical attitude, this empiricism in political science, has provided the indispensable framework for all the later developments in our democratic way of life. The 18th century English philosopher, John Locke, was its greatest exponent, and its greatest monument was and is the British constitution of which we are the inheritors.

What does this practical attitude imply? Underlying all of it is a conception of the moral order. It implies the acceptance of certain fundamental moral principles—the sacredness of the human person and the ultimate value of love, of truth, and of justice—principles which depend not at all for their validity upon the support of any state or upon the acquiescence of any individual. It is based upon the idea that life must, in the final analysis, be directed from within. And starting from this premise, this practical approach to politics seeks the best sort of practical justice that we can get in every day life—not the discussion in ivory towers of abstract justice, nor the impractical attempts to enforce abstract Platonic political ideals which the history of human relationships has proven time and again to be impossible; but, as Edmund Burke puts it: "All government,—indeed, every hu-

man benefit and engagement, every virtue and every prudent act,—is founded on compromise and barter."

.....

I should like to close my remarks tonight with an allusion to another branch of our national life not unconnected with matters I have been discussing, namely, our national cultural development. Here again, I think the evidence is clear. We are a young nation with a young nation's preoccupation with making a living and throwing back the frontiers of half a continent. In Canada this preoccupation has been intensified by inhospitable barriers of rock, forest, mountain and sea, by the severity of our climate, and by the perennial challenge and handicap of vast distances. Yet, in spite of the fact that until we have had little leisure, we have begun to realize that life is more than merely making a living. Our interest in the arts and sciences has been developing at an increasing pace of late years. There is an increasing interest in the theatre, in letters, in art, in music and the ballet, all a part of the trend which will ultimately produce a culture recognizably Canadian.

In this endeavour we are singularly fortunate in the great variety of sources from which we can draw our inspiration so that thus far, at any rate, our Canadian way of life has never become a mass culture characterized by conformity without diversity. French-speaking and English-speaking Canada will each make its unique and indispensable contribution to Canadianism; and happily the streams which contribute to Canadian culture are by no means confined to these sources.

Here I should like to speak with no inconsiderable pride of the contribution which my own City and the

Province of Manitoba are making this regard. In proportion to our size and our stage of development, I do not think that Winnipeg's contribution is excelled by that of any other city in Canada. Its peculiar characteristic is that it is a contribution made by a large number of ethnic groups which have brought to their new environment all of the riches of their respective cultures. Situated at least five hundred miles from the nearest city of the same or greater size, we have been thrown to quite an extent upon our own resources in these matters. Yet today we have one of the finest ballets and one of the finest symphony orchestras in Canada, and one of the largest musical festivals in the world; and this has been the product in large part of the great variety of sources from which our inspiration has been drawn.

Almost four years ago one of the world's most distinguished photographers, and a man whom we are all honoured to claim as a Canadian, Youssuf Karsh, wrote for Maclean's Magazine a brief article on Winnipeg, illustrated by a set of photographs of Winnipeg citizens. These photographs equal even the best of his work, than which there could be no higher praise. He ended his article with the statement with which I shall close my remarks tonight, a statement which I must say, filled me with great pride for my home City. This was what he said:

"Winnipeg is the only city in Canada that constantly reminds you of the wonderful wholeness and the wonderful diversity of the human being. In Winnipeg, photographed people of fourteen different racial backgrounds. A first-generation Canadian may

self, proud of being a Canadian and by no means ashamed of being an Armenian, I had many special feelings."

As long as we can continue to recognize the wonderful wholeness and the wonderful diversity of the free human being, as long as we Canadians realize that we can be diverse without being

the less whole, as long as we recognize that we as free men together do honour to ourselves when we value and respect each other's diversity, we shall have a national spirit that will complete the building of a great Canadian nation and provide brotherhood and justice for those who say, "I am a Canadian citizen."



A COUNTRY CHURCH

By VILHJALMUR JOHNSON, Elmhurst, Illinois

Eternal faiths toll from its bells,
Whispering o'er the fields and swells
Within the breast of man—a prayer,
For mortal sinners everywhere.

A prayer that beckons those who heed
The guiding hand of God, to speed
Their journey down his heavenly path,
Away from greed and hate and wrath.

A haven blessed from high above,
With peace serene—His gentle love,
The golden treasure of life's search,
Man's home with God—a country church.

Valdimar J. Eylands:

The Skálholt Celebration



The celebration at Skalholt July 1st, 1956

Iceland is Canada's nearest European neighbour, and a stopping place for many of the major airlines of the world which refuel their planes there daily. A trip to Iceland is therefore hardly news in our day. Traveling by air, as most people do, you are invited to sit down in a soft, reclining chair; you are wafted above the clouds, and in a matter of hours, you have covered a distance which it took our fathers weeks to span, from America to Europe, or the other way around.

But the trip which my wife and I made to the land of our forebears last summer, was unique in its purpose, although not in the mode of travel. I was invited by the Government and the State Church of Iceland to attend the 900th Anniversary of the establish-

ment of the bishopric of Skálholt as representative of the Icelandic Lutheran Synod in America. Many church men had received a similar invitation, among them several bishops and other clergy from all the Scandinavian countries. News men, reporters and photographers from many of leading European countries had come to attend the festivities. A specially chartered ship came from the continent carrying tourists and visitors. Thus it was that people of many nations and tongues converged on Skálholt, on what turned out to be a bright and beautiful day, Sunday, July 1st 1956.

Skálholt, which actually is a farm in one of Iceland's most picturesquely situated and fertile regions, is some sixty miles

distant from Reykjavík. Strange as it may seem, this place was actually the capital of Iceland for a period of 840 years, and its principal cultural centre. During those centuries there were no towns to speak of; the nation was composed mostly of farmers, there was little industry except in the homes, and the trade was for the most part in the hands of foreigners. When the Icelanders selected their first bishop, fifty six years after Christianity had nominally been made the religion of the state, by the famous decree of the Alþing in the year 1000, there was no house or home provided for this official. It is long since recognized that the adoption of Christianity in Iceland at that time was largely due to the initiative and influence of Gizur the White, a son of a Norwegian chieftain, who had settled at Skalholt. This Gizur eventually sent his son, Isleif, to the continent to be educated for the priesthood. Having completed his studies at the famous school of Herford in Westphalia. Isleifur returned to his father's homestead, married and settled down. At the age of fifty, Isleifur became the choice of the chieftains as the first bishop of the nation. Archbishop Adalbert of Bremen ordained him, on orders from the Pope, on Whit-sunday in the year 1056. He returned to Skalholt, where he died in 1080 after an episcopate of twenty four years. Isleifur's son and successor, Gizur, became actually the founder of the diocese of Skalholt, as well as that of Holar in the north. It is said of him that he excelled in all things that a man ought to know . . . everyone was willing to sit or stand as he bade . . . and it would be true to say that he was both king and bishop over the land while he lived. His outstanding accomplishment for the future of the Church was no doubt the establish-

ment of the tithe system. Ari the "learned" says concerning this: "It is a great token of how obedient the nation was to him that the payment of the tithe was made law, and it was decreed that all property in Iceland should be evaluated under oath, even the land itself, and it was agreed that this should be law, while Iceland is inhabited." After the death of his mother Dalla, whom his father had wooed and won in a most dramatic fashion in Viddidal, in the north of Iceland, he gave the family house and land to the see, declaring that "there should always be a bishop's chair in Skálholt while Iceland is inhabited and Christianity endures".

This condition was complied with until the year 1796. In the preceding decades eruptions of the volcano Hekla, and subsequent earthquakes, had made the place untenable. The Danish government then decided to move the bishop's seat to Reykjavík, where it has remained since. The actual transfer of the office did not take place until the year 1801. Up to that time 42 bishops had lived in Skalholt, thirty of them Roman Catholic and twelve Lutheran.

I had never been at Skalholt until this summer, but I was of course, like most native Icelanders, somewhat familiar with its history. It is safe to say that the history of Skalholt, and Holar, the bishop's seat in the North, is the history of the Icelandic people for generations. Everything of importance that happened was somehow connected with those two places. The annals of Skalholt are therefore of great interest to the student of Icelandic history. It is a story of pioneering and privations, interspersed with tragedy, but it is also a story of the triumph of the human spirit. It is literally true that "the stones speak"

in and around Skalholt. The roll of bishops calls to mind intellectual and administrative giants, but also some moral dwarfs and miscreants in office.

One of the most renowned of the Catholic bishops was Thorlákur Thorhallsson, (1178-1193) who was "sainted" by popular sentiment, due to his piety, learning and accomplishments for the Church. He was especially noted for his successful struggle to wrest the control of the churches from the landowners of that day. The last Catholic bishop was Ógmundur Pálsson. He was ousted from office in his old age, then feeble and blind, and taken captive, on orders presumably from capricious King Christian III of Denmark.

It was at Skalholt that the contemporary of Bishop Ógmundur, Jón Arason, the last Catholic Bishop of Holar, was executed, together with his two sons, without due process of law, on November 7, 1550. This was the crowning act of the "reformation" sponsored by the Danish government, a movement certainly more political than religious in character, and foisted upon a helpless, uninformed, and unwilling people. A cairn, near the road leading into Skalholt, perpetuates the memory of this barbarian act.

Among the most notable of the early Lutheran bishops of Skalholt, was no doubt Brynjólfur Sveinsson (1639-1675). He was an outstanding organizer, linguist and scholar. He carried on extensive learned correspondence with scholars on the continent which helped to put Iceland on the map of Europe. But Bishop Brynjólfur is remembered by succeeding generations of Icelanders, not so much for his learning and churchmanship, as for his puritanism, and the strict measures which he took in connection with the tragedy which befell Ragnheiður, his only

daughter, and the apple of his eye. This reputedly gifted and beautiful woman was seduced by Dadi, an attractive but unprincipled scoundrel whom the bishop had appointed tutor. This tragedy has been the subject of much poetry, both verse and prose, the most notable example of the latter perhaps being Guðmundur Kamban's "Jómfrú Ragnheiður." (The Virgin of Skalholt.) Bishop Brynjólfur will always be held in grateful remembrance by the Icelandic people, for covering and saving Hallgrímur Þurisson (1614-1674) for the Church of Iceland, and for Icelandic Christianity generally. Hallgrímur's poetical compositions, particularly his famous **Psalms of the Passion**, published in 1666, having passed through 45 editions, are regarded by competent scholars in the field as "the flower of Icelandic poetry, old and modern." Hallgrímur became a leper and at the approach of death, wrote his most famous hymn: "Allt eins blómstrið eina". (All life is like a flower . . .") which has been sung at the funerals of Icelanders for almost 300 years. It is said that this hymn was first sung at the funeral of Ragnheiður, the bishop's daughter, in the Skalholt cemetery.

Iceland's "golden mouthed" orator, Jón Vídalín, (1689-1720) was a bishop at Skalholt. His "húspostil" book of family sermons has appeared in fourteen editions from 1718 to 1918, a record hardly surpassed by any collection of sermons in any language. These sermons were originally prepared for and delivered in the cathedral of Skalholt, and they are due to the author's obvious sincerity, impassioned eloquence and great learning, still regarded as the most notable book of sermons ever produced by an Icelandic clergyman.

The panorama of personalities mentioned here, and many more, flash in the memory of the informed when Skalholt is visited. They did so to thousands on that memorable day, July, 1st last summer. Preparations for the festivities had been thorough and extensive. Skalholt, which in recent years has presented a sad and neglected appearance, had been improved and renovated in many ways. Several new buildings had been constructed, including the foundation for a new church building, and a part of the ceremonies consisted in the laying of its cornerstone by the present Bishop of Iceland, the Very Reverend Doctor Ásmundur Guðmundsson. But all these preparations would have availed nothing had the day not been blessed with favorable weather. It is a precarious thing to contemplate an outdoor meeting involving thousands of people, in any country, and especially in Iceland, where weather conditions are anything but static. But everything went according to plan. The following day the newspapers reported that between 7-8000 persons had traveled in 1100 automobiles to Skalholt for the celebration and without accident or injury to anyone. Police regulations prescribed a one way traffic both ways. The road was smooth, but very dusty, the bridges were narrow, but surprisingly strong; the drivers, at least those in charge of the official vehicles, were obviously experts in their field, careful and efficient.

All the invited foreign visitors travelled together in a bus, and immediately upon arrival in Skalholt were ushered into a house, not yet quite completed at the time, in order to enrobe. Then, at the chiming of three great church bells mounted on a scaffold, the procession started with Bishop Ásmundur Guðmundsson lead-

ing, together with the bishops of the Scandinavian countries, Denmark, Norway and Sweden, the Archbishop of Finland, the Dean of the Faroe Islands, and the writer immediately following. Altogether there were over one hundred clergy, in their black state Church robes with white ruffs, in this procession, walking in pairs. The procession wound its way over the top of a hill, and then down a steep slope to a temporary open air church, built in the shape of a V for this purpose. The police lifted their hands and the human sea on the hill-side divided itself, thus making the platform erected at the neck of the V accessible to the clergy. The officiating clergy proceeded to the altar in the narrow enclosure, while other pastors were seated on one side, and a massed choir, the largest choir "that ever sang in Iceland", (340 voices) on the other. This choir was directed by Dr. Pall Isolfsson. Members of the government, foreign diplomats and other prominent personalities were seated immediately in front of the enclosure. The singing of the hymns and anthems was very impressive indeed. Bishop Ásmundur preached the sermon, but he was assisted in the liturgy by the suffragan bishop of Skalholt, the Rev. Dr. Bjarni Jónsson, and the Rev. Sigurður Stefansson of Möðruvellir, the personal representative of the suffragan bishop of Hólar, the Rev. Friðrik J. Rafnar of Akureyri, who could not attend on account of illness.

In the afternoon, professor Magnús Jónsson, formerly Dean of the Department of Theology at the University of Iceland, delivered a lecture on the contribution of Skalholt to Iceland's history and cultural development. A cantata for the occasion had been composed by Rev. Sigurdur Einarsson of

Holt, and set to music by Dr. Pall Isolfsson. This was rendered by the choir under Isolfsson's direction. A historic drama, composed by the Bishop's secretary, Rev. Sveinn Vikingur, was also presented by selected artists.

In the afternoon the foreign visitors were called on to bring their greetings. Bishop Ölgaard brought greetings from Denmark, Bishop Smemo from Norway, Archbishop Solomies from Finland, Bishop Bjorkquist, former bishop of Stockholm, from Sweden, Dean Joensen of the Faroe Islands spoke for his people, and finally the writer of this article, representing the Icelandic Lutheran Synod in America.

In my short address I referred to the religious and literary heritage which the early Icelandic settlers brought with them from the homeland. In the midst of anxieties, fears and forebodings natural to a people about to embark upon a venture so uncertain and hazardous as a migration to America, the people clung to the symbols of the eternal and the abiding. These symbols they found in the religious literature originating directly or indirectly in Skalholt. The New

Testament, first translated into Icelandic in a stable in Skalholt, Hallgrímur's Passion Hymns, and Víðal Family Sermons were the principal religious treasures which our people brought with them to the new land. The moral and religious philosophy contained in these volumes, established and strengthened our fathers, in their struggle for survival, later in their achievements and successes. It was pointed out that pioneers, and their descendants have not always agreed on the interpretation of these religious classics, that churches have been erected among us, and congregations established in order to foster divergent views of thought and interpretation. Such divergent views are no longer advocated with anything like the vigor of former days, people have come more tolerant, and good now prevails among our people everywhere in the West. The language will eventually die on the lips of the sons and daughters of Iceland in America, but the faith of the fathers, expressed in the heritage from Skalholt, will survive in the hearts of their children.

HEARTFELT APPRECIATION

The Icelandic Canadian extends its deep appreciation to Tom Bjarnason for the beautiful and inspiring drawing of The Three Wise Men on the front cover of this, the Christmas issue of the magazine.

Tom is rapidly making a name for himself in his chosen profession and,

had he so desired, could have sold this beautiful picture at a price which would have given him a fair remuneration for his artistic skill. He has chosen to permit The Icelandic Canadian to reproduce it free of charge—a gift which is very much appreciated.

—The Magazine Committee

NINA HALPERIN

by W. J. LINDAL



Nina Asgrimson Halperin

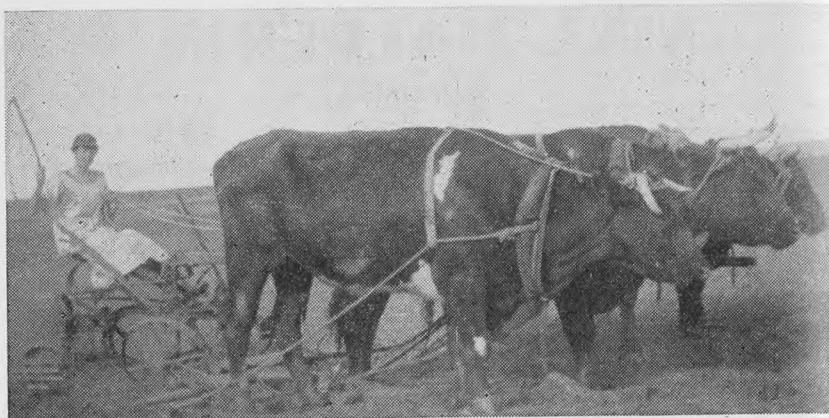
Little did Jonina Sigurlaug Asgrimson dream that her training in handling oxen on a prairie homestead would later enable her to become an expert operator of an electric cloth cutting machine, a job almost always handled by skilled and robust men. Queried on the point by the head of a large manufacturing plant she, by then Mrs. Nina Halperin, quickly replied: "O, that's because of my fearless Icelandic heritage".

Jonina was born just sixty years ago in Mountain, North Dakota. Her father, Martin Asgrimson, migrated from Iceland in 1883 and settled in Mountain, N. Dak., where he operated a general store. Her mother, Sigríður, was a daughter of Jon (of Hella) and Aðalbjörg Sigurðsson who came from Iceland in 1888 and settled on a homestead near Mountain. Martin and Sigríður married a few years later.

Martin Asgrimson died when Jonina was only two years old, leaving her widowed mother and two infant child-

ren, Jonina and Elias. In 1905 Mrs. Asgrimson moved with her two children to the Holar District, near Tantallon in Saskatchewan, where her bachelor brother, Sigurður Johnson, had homesteaded. She kept house for her brother and during the summer months Jonina and Elias attended the Holar School. It was on her uncle's farm that Jonina learned to perform all the duties on a farm—in the house, around the barn and in the hay meadows and grain fields.

A few years after the turn of the century many of the areas in Western Saskatchewan were opened up for homestead entries. Widows as well as men were allowed to file on homesteads and in 1910 Mrs. Asgrimson filed on a homestead near Merid, on the Goose Lake line southwest of Saskatoon. A little later Nina joined her mother at Merid and it was on her mother's homestead that she had some of her most interesting pioneer experiences. There were very few families in the district, ten married couples and thirty bachelors. Each of the married women would do as much washing and baking as they could for the bachelors and Nina helped her mother. There was no nurse in the district and Nina often attended the sick. She proudly states that when she was only sixteen years old she performed the duties of a midwife at two confinements. As there were so many bachelor farmers who could not supply food for the threshing gangs a male cook travelled with the threshing outfits, which in those days consisted of about twenty men. One fall the cook took sick and Nina was asked to substitute.



Nina Halperin on a sulky plow. The ox in the middle with the long horns is the one that "ran away—one sunny day".

Up to that time she had cooked only for the family but she rose to the occasion and cooked for the gang to the end of the threshing season.

For some reason, in spite of the numerous bachelors, Nina Asgrimson could not stay put on the prairies. In 1914 she decided to go to the West Coast and selected San Francisco. Her professed reason for going, she says, was to seek a milder climate, but in her inmost heart she feels that something within her, which she calls "Fate", decided her course, just as in the fall something directs the wild birds to fly south and return in the spring. One of her favorite poems is "Fate" by Susan Spalding.

The most "fateful" incident in Nina's career occurred on her way to San Francisco. She describes it in these words:

"Travelling on my way to California I planned to take a boat trip to visit a friend not far from Tacoma, Wash. The boat made a daily trip from the Tacoma dock. On that Friday 13, I stood on the pier waiting for the boat. As the time of leaving approached and seeing no boat nor people waiting, I checked with the station. I was as-

sured that it would be there, though it had not failed in 15 years. Bewilderedly I waited. Finally a man came hurriedly towards me asking if I had intended taking a boat there. I nervously nodded. He said it had burst a bearing and another boat, taking its place, had gone around the corner and that if I hurried I could make it—three minutes to the boat. He picked up my suitcase and ran off in that direction. What could I do? Run after my suitcase? Forty years ago, on another Friday 13, I became Mrs. Phil Halperin. My husband believes that Friday 13 is his lucky day. 'Fate' has been in and takes over when we least expect it."

Mrs. Halperin found San Francisco damp and at times cold, so after a few years she and her husband moved to Los Angeles where they have lived the last thirty-five years.

Phil Halperin was in the garment manufacturing business, mostly in making silk dresses and other fine women's wear. His wife joined him in the business and very soon learned to operate the speedy power sewing machine and acquired a knowledge of factory methods and procedure. After three months she became forelady

charge of twenty-five girls operating power sewing machines and at the same time taught other girls to sew.

For a while, Nina Halperin, who formerly did chores on a farm and drove oxen, became a dress model. She modelled at fashion shows, in show rooms and at theatres. But this type of display of herself did not appeal to Nina, no chance, she felt, to use her natural gifts. Her Irish wardrobe lady settled it: "It doesn't take brains, dearie, to be a walking display rack and grin like a Cheshire cat". She quit.

Phil Halperin was often away on business so it was decided that Mrs. Halperin would learn how to manage the different departments in the factory so as to be able to take charge in her husband's absence. An expert himself, Mr. Halperin taught his wife how to operate an electric cutting machine. He also taught her to mark out parts and cut materials, an art in itself requiring special skill and artistic taste. Mrs. Halperin was the first woman in California to learn how to operate these machines and perform this delicate work. But she advanced further. She became lady foreman of a cutting department with five men working under her. She marked out the work for them, made the patterns and graded the sizes needed.

When the Second World War stopped the supplies of silk from Japan the Halperins sold their business and for some years they worked in dress factories, sometimes both in the same shop, she as designer and pattern maker and he in charge of cutting. But most of the time Mrs. Halperin

was lady foreman in charge of a cutting department.

A New York executive, visiting Los Angeles shops to compare systems and equipment, saw Mrs. Halperin operating an electric cutting machine. He expressed his surprise to the owner of the plant who replied: "She's not here because of her looks, she knows her work and earns her pay, talk to her." This he did and Mrs. Halperin answered every question to his satisfaction. The following is an extract from an address this man delivered to a meeting of five hundred in New York:

"In Los Angeles I saw a miracle, a woman using an electric cutting machine as expertly as a man—cutting silk. Because of her work you would expect her to be husky. But no, she is a slender woman as calm and capable as she is warmly beautiful."

Mrs. Halperin has now retired but she is still active. One of her present hobbies is growing flowers which she shares with others. She takes an interest in California's "Girls' Town", patterned after Father Flannigan's well known "Boys' Town".

Jonina inherited the poetic bent of the Icelanders. She has composed a number of poems (more serious than the one selected) and has a collection of favorites from well known poets. She and her friends, who share her fondness of poetry, get together and read their own and other selections. In that way comfort and pleasure are derived as the sunset begins to approach.

ONE SUNNY DAY

by NINA ASGRIMSON HALPERIN,

A country maid, that milked the cow,
Fed the chickens and the sow,
Drove the ox that raked the hay
And ran away—one sunny day.
A gust of wind had blown her skirt,
His horns had thrown her a-ground unhurt.
With a snort and a bellow he'd taken flight
As if he'd been charged with dynamite,
Into a deep and slimy slough.
Alas! What could the poor maid do
But wade right in to rescue him,
To go for help! t'would be a sin.
Mosquitoes and bull-dogs and dragon flies
Kept swarming and buzzing around his eyes,
All o'er his back, all o'er his head.
'Twas enough to make him wish he were dead.
The bridle rope round the wheel had wound,
Like a derrick his forefeet were raised from the ground;
There on his hind legs he stood so tall,
The rope so tight he couldn't fall.
O, for a knife to cut that rope!
With snakes swimming round, she could but hope
They'd stay away and give her time
Amid'st the frogs and the slithery slime
To pull the rope and turn the wheel,
Which took both strength and nerves of steel.
At last 'twas done and back they went,
The maid and the ox, his fury spent,
Back to the job of raking hay,
On that lovely, bright and sunny day.

Composed by Nina Halperin
when she was sixteen years

Fanny Gudmundsen Brunt

by ARELIUS ISFELD



Fanny Gudmundsen Brunt

Fanny Gudmundsen Brunt was born at Lehi, Utah, February 1, 1890. Her father, Isaac Gunnar Gudmundsen, was the son of Guðmundur Guðmundsson, who came with the first Icelandic settlers to America and settled in Spanish Fork, Utah, in 1856.

Isaac Gudmundsen married Fanny Mulliner and in 1891, while their daughter, Fanny, was still in her infancy, they moved with their three young children to Idaho and settled in the Snake River Valley. It was in that valley that Fanny's mind became impressed with the dirt-roofed log cabin of the pioneers, the grey smoke of burning sage, the irrigation ditches, and the terrible dust storms that swept across the newly ploughed land.

From her father she inherited a love of good books and an appreciation of poetry. Many of her leisure hours were spent in listening to her father reading rhymes and improvising cleverly to amuse the children. This

was what inspired her to attempt writing little poems that she carefully kept secret.

After availing herself of the educational opportunities of the district she attended a small academy at Rexburg, Idaho. Here she gave her poetic urge a little freedom and as a result received the honour of being called the "Class Poet". On leaving the academy at Rexburg she attended High School at the Brigham Young Academy.

Later Fanny married Joseph A. Brunt of Idaho Falls, Idaho, and as a result leisure hours for her writing became very scarce. She was kept busy raising a family but the dream of writing was always in the back of her mind. It was not until after the birth of her fifth child that she was finally urged by a devoted friend to share her thoughts with others through the medium of writing. She wrote one humorous poem which was accepted for publication, and ever since this first recognition has been engaged in giving expression to her thoughts in one form of writing or another.

As she read of her Icelandic forebears and the great literature many of them produced, she was inspired to write something that would live on after her earthly stay. Her major accomplishments are in the form of two books of verse; the first being "Moods and Memories", long since out of print, and a comparatively recent effort, "Sage and Syringa", which derives its title from the prevailing sage brush and the state flower Syringa. As a result of the latter Mrs. Brunt received an honorary member-

ship in "The Mark Twain Society of Literature".

Fanny Gudmundsen Brunt, a widow since 1948, the mother of six children and grandmother of twenty three children, is now working on another book of verse which she hopes to complete before her "three score years and ten" have passed.

CHRISTMAS PRAYER

by Fanny Gudmundsen Brunt

This Christmas time our hearts
Should swell with gladness,
For homes and churches
In a land that's free,
Where every voice can join
In singing carols
Those songs of faith
For all humanity.

That evil blight of tyranny
The God of love abhors—
Threatens to enslave us
Is even at our doors,—
To silence all our carols
And hush that wondrous story
Of the Christ child and the manger
And the angels song of glory;

Oh God send forth another star
To lead wise men aright,
And spare this land of liberty
From such a sorry plight,
Turn their hearts from
Power and wealth,
To things of greater worth,
The angels then can sing again
Of "Peace, good will on earth."

Valdimar Bjornson Elected State Treasurer



Valdimar Bjornson of Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minn., was elected State Treasurer of the State of Minnesota in the recent elections in the United

States. He is a Republican and no one other Republican was elected to office in the State of Minnesota. Bjornson has previously served as Treasurer of Minnesota and in 1954 elections ran for Senator against the very popular and able Senator Humphries. He increased the Republican vote for Senator but not quite enough to win.

Valdimar Bjornson is on the editorial staff of the St. Paul Dispatch and Pioneer Press, is a well known radio commentator and an unusually powerful speaker. He is bi-lingual in English and Icelandic and during the war served in the American Navy and was posted to duty in Iceland where he met his wife, the former Guðrún Jónsdóttir.

*If Pays
to Shop at*

**EATON'S
OF CANADA**

**THROUGH THE
MAIL ORDER
CATALOGUES**

MISS ICELAND

Guðlaug Guðmundsóttir of Reykjavík, in the Miss Universe Beauty Pageant

Rhuna Emery, a daughter of Asmundur Loptson, M.L.A. and Mrs. Loptson of Yorkton, Sask., is at present a reporter "Around the Studios" in Hollywood. One of the papers for which she reports is the Farmer and Stockman, published in Regina. She and her husband, Charles E. Emery, a former Winnipeger, reside in Long Beach, California.

During the visit of the Miss Universe beauties to the Universal-International Studios in Hollywood Rhuna was one of the reporters present and her report appears in the August 2, issue of the Farmer and Stockman. The quality of its report puts Rhuna Emery well above the average run of reporters. She sought to get behind what has become a world event and interpret its true purpose and its potentiality for creating a better understanding among the peoples of the world—something sorely needed at the present time. It is to be hoped that in the not distant future Rhuna Emery will send equally interesting and thought-provoking news reports to the Icelandic Canadian. The report follows:

AROUND THE STUDIOS

with our reporter Rhuna Emery

For 10 days, Long Beach has had its yearly role as the whistle capital of the world and from 44 United States girls and 29 contestants from far off nations has been selected "the most beautiful girl in the world", Miss Universe. She is a minister's daughter, 20 year-old Carol Morris from Iowa who also won the title of Miss United States.

I asked auburn-haired Elaine Bishenden, Canada's entry in the pageant, if there was anything about the beauty event that she didn't like.

The concert-pianist from Toronto, who has 200 medals for music, answered: "I think too much emphasis is put on the glamour end of the pageant and not enough on the theme of it. In addition to being pretty girls from all over, we are also a gathering of women from the nations of the world

here to get to know each other better."

Winsome Miss Canada, who also won 30 trophies for dancing, was thinking of the Creed she and the other girls read at their first public appearance in Long Beach when each girl in native dress joined the others in these words: "We, representing the countries of the world in the Miss Universe Beauty Pageant, in order to further the cause of peace, justice and mutual understanding do solemnly dedicate ourselves to the highest ideals of sportsmanship, friendship and good will among all the people of the universe."

As a close observer of the pageant for the last four years, I have often thought its theme song should be Rogers and Hammerstein's catchy tune "Getting to Know You". This indeed is the great potential of the pageant.

women the world over understand each other and have mutual respect and affection, would they tolerate their husbands and sons warring against each other?

Watching the contestants during their ten days of very close companionship, one may be a dreamer but to see Miss France and Miss Germany whose nations have battled each other three times in the last century laugh over an American malt warms the heart. To see Orthodox Greek Catholic, Miss Greece, Roman Catholic Miss Italy, Protestant Miss Iceland and Moslem Miss Turkey learn the art of the fan of Miss Japan whose religion is something to remember. To see Miss Michigan teach American lang to Miss Peru and Miss Israel; to see Miss Alaska let Miss Holland try on her fur-trimmed parka while she "klomps" around in the latter's wooden shoes; to hear Miss Canada brag about Alberta's oil wells to Miss Texas; to see reserved Miss Sweden take rhumba lesson from vivacious Miss Brazil. This is human relations at its best. "We are a gathering of simple girls, not politicians."

I asked last year's Miss Universe, beautiful Hillevi Ronbin of Sweden, what she had gained from her year as the most beautiful girl in the world. Her answer was "I am proud of the friendships I have made and proud of having had the opportunity to live in America and to visit almost every one of the United States and in getting to know American people as you only can get to know them—by living among them. I am proud of the lasting friends I have made with girls from all over the world and of the knowledge I have gained—that people are the same at heart all over the world and it is good to be one of them."

One of the nicest things about cover-

ing the contest in Long Beach this year was dusting off my Icelandic and interviewing the blue-eyed blonde with peaches-and-cream skin by the name of Guðlaug Guðmundsdóttir, from Reykjavík, Iceland. She is Iceland's first entry in the world famous beauty pageant.

It didn't take me long to discover that this 19-year-old beauty from near the Arctic was quite a package of brains and beauty who, though she didn't win, had hundreds of fans among the spectators.

Guðlaug speaks Swedish, Danish and German in addition to her mother tongue and, had my Icelandic collapsed, we could probably have managed in English as she has a goodly smattering of that too.

In Reykjavík, this Viking daughter works in a drug store.

"They are not like here," she told me. "We just carry drugs."

She plans to go to school in Stockholm and become an airline hostess unless the boy friend at home changes her mind.

Her father is an architect and she is the youngest of four children.

"My brother and sisters are all married. I'm an old maid because in Iceland they marry very young—at 16 and 17 years. I think the girls are more marriage-minded than career-minded and it's not like here. Married women seldom work in my country."

For exercise Miss Iceland plays badminton. "It became very popular in Iceland about a year and a half ago."

I learned there is no TV as yet in the strategically important little island but there are eight movie houses in Reykjavík. Grace Kelly is a favorite with Icelanders.

"American girls are the most friendly I have ever met," Miss Ice-

land told me. She roomed with the contestant from Nebraska, a lovely brunette who placed fourth in the Miss U.S.A. contest.

The gracious blonde from the north also cleared up a couple of questions for Americans here. There are no Eskimos in Iceland, a question she was frequently asked. There is no shortage either of blondes. Here in fact, is one of the few countries in the world where blondes outnumber the brunettes.

MEMO—This might be interesting the readers.

Miss Iceland's official hostess chaperon during her stay in Long Beach was Mrs. Sumi Swanson, who was reared on the Canadian prairies. Mrs. Swanson was born in Iceland, but speaks the language like a native, and her husband, a real estate man, now live in Long Beach but still have many friends in Winnipeg and on the prairies of Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

Hon. Lester B. Pearson in Iceland

Hon. L. B. Pearson, Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs, is, it will be recalled, one of the three men appointed by NATO to study the functions of that organization in both its military and economic aspects.

The "three wise men" from Italy, Norway and Canada respectively, met in Paris last September. On his way back Mr. Pearson stopped off for three days in Iceland.

The daily press of Reykjavik was very laudatory in its reports on the Canadian minister and triple column photographs were published daily during the three days he and Mrs. Pearson were there.

One was a picture of Mr. and Mrs. Pearson as they alighted from the plane at the Reykjavik airfield, one was taken at Pingvellir, a third at a press conference, and numerous others.

During their visit the Canadian minister of External Affairs and Mrs. Pearson were guests of honor at banquets tendered them by the President of Iceland, Asgeir Asgeirsson, and by the acting minister of foreign affairs, Emil Jonsson.

The high esteem in which the people of Iceland held Mr. Pearson at this time has undoubtedly been much enhanced by the brilliant leadership he showed during the debates in the General Assembly of the United Nations on the Suez Canal and Hungarian crises.

As was to be expected press reporters in Iceland asked Mr. Pearson some questions about the Icelandic group in Canada. The following is a report of an interview as reported in one of the Reykjavik dailies and republished in the *Heimskringla* of Winnipeg.

"In an interview with newspapermen Mr. Pearson said that in his considered opinion no national group which had migrated to Canada, had relatively done more constructive work than this small Icelandic group.

"He said that the Icelanders had rendered valuable service in the cultural field and in the building of sound citizenship."

"On the other hand, he added, he had not heard of a single Icelandic millionaire."

Prof. Bessason Addresses Icelandic Canadian Club

The Icelandic Canadian Club held a meeting in the Unitarian Church, Banning street on Monday evening, November 19 last.

Highlights of the evening were the introduction of a new professor in Icelandic language and literature at the University of Manitoba, Mr. Haraldur Bessason of Akureyri, Iceland, and the presentation of the annual Gudrun Norman scholarship.

Judge W. J. Lindal introduced Professor Bessason. He spoke of his high qualification as a teacher, his pleasing personality and his determination to discharge the responsibilities placed upon him as head of his Department.

In the course of his remarks Judge Lindal pointed out that for the first time in many years Anglo-Saxon was being taught at the University of Manitoba and that it was significant that the instructor in Anglo-Saxon, Prof. R. M. Dawson, of the English Department, is taking Icelandic from the Professor of Icelandic, Haraldur Bessason. Two other Professors, K. W. Maurer of the German Department in the University and W. A. Packer of the German Department in United College are also taking Icelandic from Professor Bessason.

Professor Bessason gave a scholarly exposition of the Icelandic Folk Tales and mentioned the main classes or divisions these folk tales fall into. He also mentioned the first publication and spoke about the most remarkable collection of folk stories, which commonly is ascribed to Jon Arason, the first publication of which took place in Leipzig, Germany, in the years 1862

and 1864. The folk tales are not history but fantastic stories which distinctly give expression to the creative mental power of the Icelandic people.

In an interview with this reporter Prof. Bessason expressed appreciation of kindness already shown to him and in his sincere modesty hastened to point out that he was not the first person to give instruction in Icelandic to Manitoba University professors.

John K. Marteinsson of Langruth, Man., was presented with the Gudrun Norman scholarship of \$100.00, one of five scholarships of \$100.00 each to be awarded in accordance with the will of the late Gudrun Norman to promising high school students of Icelandic extraction intending to take a university course.

Three students from the Icelandic class at the University were introduced by Mr. Wilhelm Kristjanson—Misses Helga and Olof Baldvinson of Thicket Portage, Manitoba, and John Marteinsson, already mentioned.

It was decided at the meeting that all students in the Icelandic class be given free membership in the Icelandic Canadian Club, including each year's subscription to the Icelandic Canadian magazine.

Mr. Axel Vopnfjord moved a vote of thanks to Professor Bessason whose scholarly address, The Icelandic Canadian plans to publish in the Spring issue.

Miss Mattie Halldorson, President of the Icelandic Canadian Club, was in the chair. Interesting slides from the Pacific Coast were shown by Mrs. M. Johnson. Refreshments were served after the meeting. —A. E.

The Leif Erikson Association Inc.

The Leif Erikson Association Inc. of Los Angeles, California, was founded by social and fraternal groups of Southern California of Scandinavian descent. It began as an informal group, sponsoring a festival on Leif Erikson Day in 1947, but in 1952 it was changed to a non-profit corporation national in scope, with the objective "to uphold in any practical way the memory of Leif Erikson as the first discoverer of the American continent, and as an explorer, pioneer and champion of liberty who truly represented in early days the fundamental ideas of the American way of life."

Membership is open to all those supporting the objectives of the organization, subject to approval by the association.

The association sponsors annually a Leif Erikson Day Festival with a program of songs, speeches and folk dances. A varied assortment of Scandinavian food is served.

His Worship Mayor Norris Paulson of Los Angeles proclaimed Saturday, October 6th, 1956, as Leif Erikson Day in the city. A festival was held at the Los Angeles Breakfast Club.

Recently the association established an award for pioneering achievements furthering the cause of human liberty and well-being. This award was publicly announced at an unveiling of a plaque symbolizing the award which took place at the festival October 6th.

It is the hope of its founders that the award will be helpful in developing a growing public consciousness of the importance of the pioneering spirit to modern civilization and to continue material and spiritual well-being everywhere.

In time it is expected that several classes of awards will be established including cash awards for worthy projects as well as purely honorary plaques and medals presented to institutions and individuals in recognition of the highest degree of successful pioneering achievements.

Besides the Leif Erikson award other projects initiated by the association include:

1. Thesis contests among students who will be awarded scholarships or rewarded by other means available to the association.
2. Co-ordination with other cultural or charity organizations and assistance to these organizations when possible.
3. Sponsorship of historical research and publications pertaining to explorations, discoveries and other pioneering work.

The cost involved in this award will be carried by the Leif Erikson Foundation which is being set up by the association, and will be sustained by donations and, possibly, some income from various activities of the Leif Erikson Association Inc.

Enquiries concerning the Foundation should be addressed to::

**Leif Erikson Association Inc.,
1359 West 24th Street,
Los Angeles, California.**

Mr. Neil Thor is president of The Leif Erikson Association, Inc., and Mrs. Gudny Thorwaldson the corresponding secretary. Johannes S. Newton is chairman of the Leif Erikson Award Committee. —T.O.S.T.

JÓN RUNÓLFSSON

By W. KRISTJANSON



Jón Runólfsson

Jon Runolfsson (1856–1930) is one of the best Icelandic Canadian lyric poets, over the period of those years.

Runolfsson emigrated from Iceland in 1879. He settled first in Minneota, Minnesota, and four years later he moved to Manitoba, where he lived the rest of his life.

In his early years in Winnipeg, Runolfsson worked as a common laborer, but this did not prevent his poetic faculty from being active and he was a member of the Oriental Society, a short-lived cultural organization in Winnipeg, in the early eighties. He had limited schooling, but he read extensively in Icelandic, English, and Scandinavian literature. Soon he turned to public school teaching, which became his life-

time vocation and he taught in New Iceland and the Shoal Lake and Lake Manitoba districts. Many summers he worked in the threshing season in the Argyle district. Of this world's goods he accumulated but little.

Jon Runolfsson was a lyric poet of high rank. His poetic tribute to Iceland in "Sephyrus" is one of the finest written this side of the Atlantic, but he was less an Icelandic poet and more a universal poet than perhaps any of the Icelandic born poets in America.

Although Jon Runolfsson had friends, he never had the anchor of a permanent home and he was a lonely man, ever seeking the close companionship and solace which he failed to find in life. His "Hillingar á Sahara" (Desert Mirage) is symbolic of the poet's futile search for happiness. In his poetry there is a cry for the Brotherhood of Man. Lonely himself, he had a tender sympathy for those whose lot it was to travel on the stony and thorny paths of life.

The touch of a killing night frost is the occasion of an exquisite personal and nature lyric. Devout religious feeling is indicated in his masterly translations of "Lead, Kindly Light", "From Greenland's Icy Mountains", and other hymns.

Jon Runolfsson translated a considerable body of select poetry, by English, United States, and Canadian poets. These translations are generally excellent

and some are superlatively well done. His major work of translation, Tennyson's "Enoch Arden", is perhaps superior in part to the original.

Some of Jon Runolfsson's lyric poems are sheer music and imagery. He was ever the craftsman and the artist and an exacting self-critic. He possessed mastery of language and metrical skill as well as genuine lyric feeling.

Nearly all of Jon Runolfsson's preserved poems were published in "Þóð Leiftur" (Silent Flashes), in Winnipeg, in 1924.

◦ ◦ ◦

ENOCH ARDEN

By ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

Þýtt hefur JÓN RUNÓLFSSON

Strandraðir langra kletta klýfur gjögur;
 í gjögri því er frauð við fölan sand;
 við bryggju gegnt er þyrring rauðra þaka;
 þá hrörleg kirkja; hærra langur stígur
 Klífur að mylnu, er mænir hátt; en bak við
 ber gráa og sendna heiðarbrún við himin
 og hauga Dana; dafnar heslirunnur
 í skálmyndaðri skrúðlaut heiðarinnar,
 og bleður margur hnetur þar á haustin.

Fyr hundrað árum hjer í þessu gjögri
 þrjú börn frá þremur húsum, Anna Lee,
 smáneyja þorpsins friðust, Filip Ray
 son mylumannsins ríka, og Enok Arden,
 munaðarlaus og ófágaður angí,
 son fiskimanns, er hafði í vetrarveðrum
 einhverju sinni brotið fley og farist—
 sjer ljeku innan um fjörurusl og rekald,
 ryðorpnar festar, kaðla, dumbrauð dráttnet
 og róðrarbáta ráðið þar til hlunns.
 Úr lausum sandi bjuggu þau sjer borgir
 og horfðu á brimið þvo þær aftur út,
 eða' eltu fram og flýðu holskeflurnar
 og ljetu dag hvern lítil fótspor eftir,
 sem líka dag hvern aldan nam á brott.

Í gljúfrvegginn hellisskúti skarst;
 þar ljetust börnin búa. Hafði Enok
 þá annan daginn forráð, Filip hinn,
 en hússins frú var Anna æ hin sama;
 samt vildi til, að vildi Enok skipa
 húsbóna sessinn heila viku í senn;
 "Því jeg á húsið; hún er konan mínn."
 "Mín kona líka," greip þá Filip fram í,
 "og skiftumst á og búum báðir jafnt."
 Er slóst í hart, og Enok orkumeiri
 hjelt velli, fyltust augun bláu Filips
 af tártaflóði ráðalausrar reiði,
 "Eg hata þig," kvað óp hans við til Enoks;
 grjet þá af samharm litla konan líka
 og bað þá deila ekki um sig, og sagði,
 hún vildi vera litla brúðin beggja.

Að morgni liðnum bernsku rauðra rósá,
 er sunna lífs í hádagshæðir svifin
 með nýjum varma vakti beggja hjörtu,
 þá feldu báðir ástarhug til hennar,
 og tjáði Enok henni allan vilja,
 en Filip ól í hjarta þrá og þagði;
 samt virtist mærin þýðast Filip fremur,
 en unni hinum þótt hún það ei vissi,
 og hefði aðspurð óðar slíku neitað.
 Nú var það Enoks fasta mark og mið,
 að draga saman, spara í und og æð,
 og eignast bát og bústað handa Önnu;
 svo loks með þetta áform fyrir augum,
 ei fangasælli garp til sjóar gat,
 nje varfærnari ef í krappan komst
 und brimi sorfnum björgum þeirrar strandar
 en Enok. Auk þess hafði 'ann verið
 með varningsskipi ár í utanferðum,
 fullnaðar skil á farmannsprófi gjört,
 og mannlif hafði 'ann þrisvar sinnum sótt
 í voðagreipar hvítfissandi hranna,
 og var af öllum mikils virtur maður,
 og hafði um tvítugt eignast bát og bústaður
 og Önnu búið einkar snoturt hreiður
 á hálfrí leið upp mylnustiinn mjóa.

ENOCH ARDEN

By ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

Long lines of cliff breaking have left a chasm;
And in the chasm are foam and yellow sands;
Beyond, red roofs about a narrow wharf
In cluster; then a moulder'd church; and higher
A long street climbs to one tall-tower'd mill;
And high in heaven behind it a grey down
With Danish barrows; and a hazelwood,
By autumn mutters haunted, flourishes
Green in a cuplike hollow of the down.

Here on this beach a hundred years ago,
Three children of three houses, Annie Lee,
The prettiest little damsel in the port,
And Philip Ray, the miller's only son,
And Enoch Arden, a rough sailor's lad
Made orphan by a winter shipwreck, play'd
Among the waste and lumber of the shore,
Hard coils of cordage, swarthy fishing-nets,
And built their castles of dissolving sand
To watch them overflow'd, or following up
And flying the white breaker, daily left
The little footprint daily wash'd away.

A narrow cave ran in beneath the cliff:
In this the children play'd at keeping house.
Enoch was host one day, Philip the next,
While Annie still was mistress; but at times
Enoch would hold possession for a week:
'This is my house and this my little wife.'
'Mine too' said Pihilp 'turn and turn about.'
When, if they quarrell'd, Enoch stronger-made
Was master: then would Philip, his blue eyes
All flooded with the helpless wrath of tears,
Shriek out 'I hate you, Enoch,' and at this
The little wife would weep for company,
And pray them not to quarrel for her sake,
And say she would be little wife to both.

But when the dawn of rosy childhood past,
And the new warmth of life's ascending-sun
Was felt by either, either fixed his heart
On that one girl; and Enoch spoke his love,
But Philip loved in silence; and the girl
Seem'd kinder unto Philip than to him;
But she loved Enoch; tho' she knew it not,
And would if ask'd deny it. Enoch set
A purpose evermore before his eyes,
To hoard all savings to the uttermost,
To purchase his own boat, and make a home
For Annie: and so prosper'd that at last
A luckier or a bolder fisherman,
A carefuller in peril, did not breathe
For leagues along that breaker-beaten coast
Than Enoch. Likewise had he served a year
On board a merchantman, and made himself
Full sailor; and he thrice had pluck'd a life
From the dread sweep of the down-streaming seas:
And all men look'd upon him favourably:
And ere he touch'd his one-and-twentieth May
He purchased his own boat, and made a home
For Annie, neat and nestlike, halfway up
The narrow street that clamber'd toward the mill.

Cornerstone Laid for Addition to Betel

Premier Douglas M. Campbell officiated on Sunday November 18, 1956, at the laying of the cornerstone of the addition to the present Betel Home for the Aged, at Gimli, Manitoba.

This was the second ceremony since actual construction was commenced of the new addition. On Sunday, September 23, the turning of the first sod ceremony took place. Present among others were: Mayor Barney Egilson, chairman of the Special Building Committee of six members, who turned the sod; Frank Lount, the

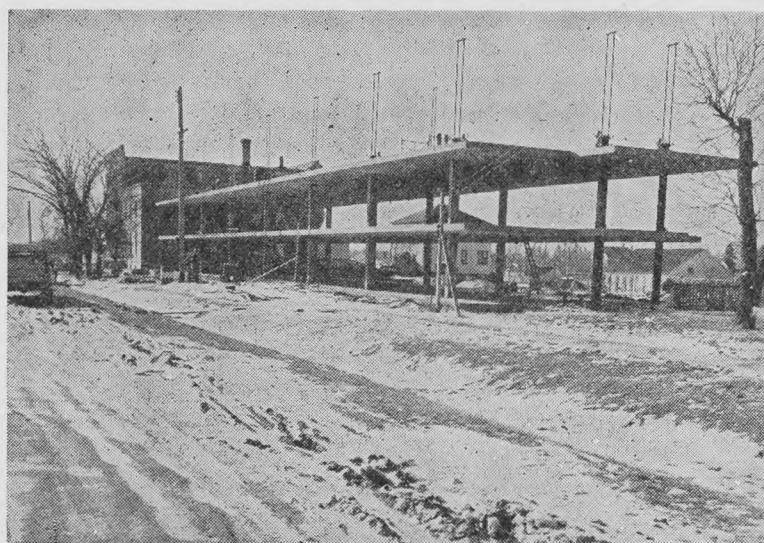
building contractor, Sveinn Bjarnason, superintendent of construction; Rev. B. Fridriksson, at that time Lutheran Pastor in Gimli; Dr. G. Johnson of Gimli; and Mrs. Augusta Tallman, Matron of Betel.

Over 300 people attended the cornerstone ceremony, which was in the hands of Dr. P. H. T. Thorlakson, Chairman of the Betel Committee. Hon. Robert W. Bend, who was Minister of Health when plans were made for the financing of the addition, delivered the main address. Mayor

Barney Egilson extended greetings. Dr. V. J. Eylands, President of the Icelandic Lutheran Synod, and Rev. P. M. Petursson, a member of the general advisory committee, spoke briefly and Rev. S. Olafson of Selkirk, a strong supporter of Betel for many years, gave the benediction.

Before assisting in laying the cornerstone the Premier of Manitoba paid tribute to the pioneers who through their sacrifice, built up the district and made possible the erection of a sunset home for others who follow in their footsteps.

The total amount subscribed at



Progress made on the new addition to "BETEL" to November 15th, 1956

In his address Mr. Bend traced the steps leading to the arrangement which made the financing of the building possible. The total cost is \$180,000.00 of which the province is contributing \$42,500. This is in accordance with a plan laid down by the provincial government in 1955, whereby grants are made to new buildings of this kind on a per-room basis.

time the cornerstone was laid was approximately \$110,000.00, leaving a balance of \$70,000.00 still to be raised.

Following the ceremony refreshments, supplied by Betel and the Lutheran Ladies Aid were served in the main building, consisting of sandwiches, special Icelandic dishes and coffee prepared in the Icelandic style, of which over 700 cups were served.

-W. J. I.



WALKING MATCHES

Manitoba Sport of the Eighteen-Eighties

by W. KRISTJANSON

"Go-As-You-Pleasant" walking matches were a prominent feature of sports activity in Winnipeg, about 1880, and again about 1888. In the latter period there were commonly twenty-four-hour races, with time out only for brief rests, refreshments, a rub-down, but in some of these events there was a twelve-hour break between two twelve hour grinds on the track. Good runners commonly covered over one hundred miles in the twenty-four hours, and the best sometimes did over 130 miles, depending on conditions of weather and track. Hornsby, a well-known Manitoba runner, competing against Sullivan, of St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1879, covered only 105 to Sullivan's 107 miles. Jourdan and McDermott, outstanding runners in the eighties, were well over the hundred miles.

The Icelandic immigrants had no special background or training for these track competitions but pastoral life and much travelling on foot had developed their walking prowess, and their competitive spirit had found exercise in their national style wrestling, the "Glíma", and also other popular competitive Icelandic pastimes. It was but natural, then, that several Icelanders should become interested in the walking competitions in the eighties, in Winnipeg. The first on record was Sigurdur Antonius, who came to New Iceland (the Gimli-Riverton district of the Interlake district) in 1876, then twenty-six years of age. He stayed in New Iceland one year and then worked on a farm west of Winnipeg for two years. He was pro-

verbially light of foot and still enjoyed a run at the age of eighty years. In 1879, in competition in Winnipeg, he covered the distance of 132 miles in twenty-four hours. (G. J. Oleson: *Almanak*, 1941, p. 69. See also *Baldur Gazette*, March 14, 1940, p. 3). He was then 29 years of age.

Several Icelandic runners competed in the years 1888 and 1889, and were usually prominent. However, in a twenty-four hour race, in May, 1888, the well-known runner, McDermott was first, with 102 miles and six laps, and Ascepensis, an Indian, was second, with 99 miles, while an Icelandic contestant, Solvason, dropped out.

In a twenty-four hour contest at the Victoria Gardens, June 15, 1888, three of seven contestants were Icelandic: John Hordal, a youth of seventeen; Thorarinn Jonsson, and Magnus Markusson. Conditions of the race were that half the gate receipts were to be divided among the winners in the proportion of 50 per cent to the first, 30 per cent to the second, and 20 per cent to the third. McDermott was not entered, but Hornsby was, and was declared a favorite.

The race began at 9 p.m., in the presence of a large crowd. "Seven men took to the track, which was in very good condition. Music was furnished by the Infantry School band, and it was curious to watch the effect on the runners" (*The Daily Free Press*, June 16, 1888). At ten o'clock Texas Jack and Jonsson were leading, at seven miles and six miles respectively, but at 3 o'clock the order was Hordal, 34

miles; Jonsson, 32 miles; Markusson, 32 miles; Texas Jack, 31.

Heavy rain fell during the night, testing severely the stamina of the runners. "All through the drenching downpour of Friday night the six men left in the race marched on or ran on. The track became very soft and bad in the morning, but still the procession went around the track till it was tramped down hard. When day came the men started dropping out, and in the afternoon only the three Icelanders were left in the race."

John Hordal was the winner. Greatly exhausted, he pluckily kept to the track till the time was up, making a desperate effort to beat the record of 102 miles made by McDermott in the previous race. Had it not been for the rain, he would have succeeded, as he covered all but a mile of the distance, and the spectators applauded him warmly as he staggered over the last few laps. Markusson, lightly built, and a beautiful runner, but lacking the sheer physical strength of the sturdily built Hordal, was taken ill towards the end of the race, and by sheer grit he kept going until the time was up. The final standing was: Hordal, 101 miles, one lap; Jonsson, 97 miles, 1 lap; Markusson, 85 miles, 6 laps; Hornsby 66 miles, 3 laps.

Despite the severe strain of the race, the runners recovered quickly. "All three winners were on the street yesterday, which says much for their physical superiority over the winners of the last 24-hour race, some of whom were confined to their homes for days after. Hordal is only 17 years old, and has had little preparatory training." (*Daily Free Press*, June 18, 1888).

McDermott wished to meet the winner of this race, and he and Hordal were matched in a challenge race, June 30th. The start was at 10:30 a.m.

on a Saturday morning, and this there was a break over Sunday, race being resumed on Monday morning. At half time, McDermott leading, with 58 miles and five laps. Hordal's 58 miles and two laps.

Rain interfered the second day, the track was reduced to a mere puddle, but over three thousand spectators attended. McDermott dropped out after the rain commenced, having done only 87 miles. "Hordal, however, walked on to the last, covering 15 miles, without pushing himself unduly." (*Free Press*, July 3rd, 1888).

On the same day and at the same place, but commencing at a different time, another walking race—a free-for-all—took place. With the stimulus of close competition, the winners pushing each other for the lead, Hordal's time was considerably bettered. The winner, Jourdan, a burly Métis, ne Hudson's Bay Company mail carrier, covered 117 miles and three laps. Simpson, an Infantry School man, 115 miles, and Markusson, 114 miles. Ascepensis was fourth, with 95 miles, and 6 laps, and Jonsson fifth, with 91 miles and one lap.

A twenty-four hour walking race for the Manitoba championship was held in Dufferin Park, August 18, 1888. Entries included Jourdan, McDermott, Simpson, Hordal, Mansson and Jonsson. Only three finished the time: Jourdan, covering 111 miles, Markusson, 98, and Simpson, 91 miles. Hordal had become ill, but had a slight edge on McDermott at the 70 mile mark. At one point in the race, Jourdan left the track, and ran to the grass. The other contestants protested, and one referee told Jourdan to stop, but the other referee told him to continue. After the race, Markusson claimed the belt, on Jourdan's behalf, but Jourdan averred that he

is merely left the track to clean his
ay, nocassins, and he and his friends
mressed his case till the decision was
tt given him.

lap However, a second match to settle
s. the dispute took place on September
y, 5 and 17, on a Saturday and Mon-
e Day. Jourdan won, covering 134 miles,
d three laps. Hordal and McDermott
covered 124 miles; Markusson 122 and
ha Jonsson 100 miles.

Jourdan was the undisputed champion, nor did he have to strain himself to win his races. McDermott and Markusson however, were more stylish runners and Markusson proved superior on a shorter distance. "The three most stylish runners I have seen are Gusti Magnusson (of Lundar, who competed in the 1920's), McDermott, and Magnus Markusson. The Icelanders were untrained, and had little or no coaching. Sheer grit carried them through in competitions. Hordal collapsed at the end of one of his races, and was carried away on a stretcher. Markusson finished one of his earlier races with blisters on his feet and a fitsick stomach." (Paul Reykdal, a veteran athlete and sports enthusiast, personal communication, 1949.)

There were other, shorter races. In a twenty-five mile race in Victoria Gardens, July 21st, 1888, Magnus Markusson came first, and in a ten mile race, May 24, 1889, he was again first with Jourdan second, the winner's time being 61 minutes. (*Lögberg, May 29, 1889*). In a twelve-hour Go-As-You-Pleas, July 17, 1889, Jourdan was first, covering 72 miles, four laps, with two Icelanders, Gísli (Jonsson) Bildfell, 64 miles, and Alexander Davidson, 58 miles, four laps, placing second and third respectively. Bildfell had been working on a railroad that summer, and had no training, so it is not to be wondered that Jourdan came in "fresh

as a daisy"—(*The Sun*, July 2nd, 1889), while others were very tired. The achievement of the Icelandic contestants was not so much in the distance covered as in the grit displayed, in view of their lack of training.

JUVENILE RACES, TOO.

There were juvenile Go-As-You-Pleas races in 1888. In one of these, for competitors under fourteen years of age, on June 25, there were ten entries. "Olson (Asmundur Olson), the young Icelander, went ahead at the start and kept up a steady run for nearly the entire time, coming in fresh after covering 29 miles, 1½ laps, an average considerably over 7 miles per hour. The winner, the young Icelander, received quite an ovation upon the termination of the contest" (*Daily Free Press*, June 26, 1888).

A banquet was held in the Icelandic Hall, July 30, 1888, to celebrate Hordal's victory over McDermott, and to honor him and the others who had done credit to the Icelandic community in the walking matches in the summer of 1888. The hall was packed. Hordal was presented with a silver medal, on one side of which was the Icelandic Falcon, with outspread wings, and on the other a runner, inscribed "Presentation for the walking match, July 2, 1888 (Gjöf fyrir kappgönguna 2. júlí, 1888). From the Icelandic people in Winnipeg to J. J. Hordal".

There were several toasts and speeches, and two original appropriate poems. This was the first time that Icelanders had taken part in a general competition, except with the pick and shovel, and the showing was a source of great pride. The theme of Kristinn Stefansson's poem was "Little by little they as say the way, and change opinions about us."

IN THE NEWS

MR and MRS. J. S. GILLIES CELEBRATE GOLDEN WEDDING

Mr. and Mrs. John S. Gillies, 971 Dominion St., Winnipeg, celebrated their golden wedding anniversary on August 29 when they were at home to approximately 200 friends and relatives.

They were born in Iceland and both came to Canada with their parents while very young, and have lived in Winnipeg ever since.

Mr. Gillies has been proprietor of a grocery business at 1114 Portage Ave., for approximately 40 years.

They have three sons and one daughter. They are Franklin of London, Ont., Norman of Winnipeg, Gladys Sommerfeld of Ottawa and Emil in Winnipeg.

Mr. and Mrs. Gillies have been active members of various organizations and have both given years of unselfish service and devotion to the work of the First Lutheran Church.



MR. and MRS. GUDMUNDUR M. BJARNASON CELEBRATE GOLDEN WEDDING

Mr. and Mrs. Gudmundur M. Bjarnason of Winnipeg celebrated their golden wedding anniversary on October 18. A reception in their honor was held at the home of their son and daughter-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Halldor Bjarnason, 1010 Garfield Street.

Mr. Bjarnason was born in Iceland in 1871 and came to Canada in 1900, and has lived in Winnipeg ever since.

His wife, Halldora Petrina, was born in Grafton, North Dakota, in 1880.

Halldora is well known for her painting, a hobby which she still carries on.

In the early days Mr. Bjarnason worked at railroad construction and farming. He is a painter and decorator by trade and for many years has followed that calling.

They have three sons and five daughters. They are Jon Sigurdson and Halldor Stefan of Winnipeg, Bjarni Thorvald of Toronto, Ont., Mrs. Solveig Neil of Windsor, Ont., Steinunn, Ingibjorg and Mrs. Lara Morris of Winnipeg and Mrs. Matthildur Sallows of Shilo, Man.

Mr. and Mrs. Bjarnason have taken an active part in Icelandic organizations and, particularly, First Lutheran Church and the I.O.G.T. lodge.



CANADIAN HANDICRAFTS GUILD HONORS MR. AND MRS ALBERT WATHNE

In recognition of Mrs. Albert Wathne's years of long and devoted service to the Canadian Handicrafts Guild and Mr. Wathne's assistance in his wife's work, the Manitoba branch of the guild presented each with a membership in the organization at a special farewell gathering held recently by the branch at the Handicrafts House on Kennedy Street in Winnipeg.

Mr. and Mrs. Wathne are moving to reside at the Pacific Coast.

A weaver, superb, Mrs. Wathne has been a member of the Manitoba branch for almost 25 years and an active executive member for approximately 20 years.

Mrs. Wathne's work in handicrafts

goes back to the 1920s when she took an active part in a folklore display at the Royal Alexandra Hotel in Winnipeg in 1928. At that time crafts and arts, native costumes and dances of the many ethnic groups in the city were exhibited and Mrs. Wathne was active in this as a representative of the Icelandic population of the province.

When the Manitoba branch of the guild was launched she again represented the Icelanders at its meetings and exhibitions. She joined the Guild in 1933.

Mrs. Wathne has given countless numbers of talks and demonstrations in weaving to various groups throughout the city, and was for many years educational convener of the Guild.

She also spent parts of many summers at Lutheran Church camps instructing and teaching others, young and old, the art of weaving. Both she and Mr. Wathne have been active members of First Lutheran Church in Winnipeg for many years.

Besides her guild work Mrs. Wathne has given valuable service to the Winnipeg Central Volunteer Bureau and was translator of scripts and data from Icelandic to English for the Wartime Prices and Trade Board during World War Two.

★

AKUREYRI COLLEGE HEAD VISITS CANADA AND U. S.

A visit to Canada and the United States was paid this fall by Steindor Steindorsson, Principal of Akureyri College in Iceland. Mr. Steindorsson, who hails from Hlöðum in Eyjafjörður, during his Winnipeg visit was guest speaker at a meeting in First Lutheran Church held under the auspices of the Icelandic National League. Rev. Dr. Valdimar J. Eylands presided. The

speaker was introduced by Professor Haraldur Bessason, Professor of Icelandic, University of Manitoba, a former classmate of Mr. Steindorsson. Judge W. J. Lindal of Winnipeg moved a vote of thanks. Mr. Steindorsson spoke at a subsequent meeting at Gimli, Man., prior to going south for his tour of the United States.

★

THIRTY YEARS' SERVICE WITH COMMONWEALTH EDISON CO.



Daniel S. Olafson

Daniel S. Olafson, who was born on Hecla Island, Lake Winnipeg, has now completed thirty years' service with the Commonwealth Edison Co., Inc., of Chicago. In many ways he has progressed the hard way. Though his parents' home was seven miles from school education. After having worked for a few years at fishing on Lake Winnipeg the ambitious young man determined to make his mark in another field and

proceeded to Chicago where he worked for a while in the manufacturing establishment of the late Hjörtur Thordarson. Thirty years ago he obtained employment with the Commonwealth Edison Co. Shortly after coming to Chicago Mr. Olafson had decided to study Electrical Engineering at home and evening classes and after many years' determined effort completed his studies and now is a member of the American Institute of Electrical Engineering. Daniel is married and he and his wife Eleanor have two children, Robert, in the American Navy, at present stationed at Guam, and Dale, attending High School.



NORTH DAKOTA JURIST SERVES ON FREEDOMS FOUNDATION AWARD PANEL

On November 19, Freedom Foundation at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania authorized a press release a part of which is as follows:

Honorable G. Grimson, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of North

Dakota, has been named a member of the Distinguished Awards Jury which will select recipients of the 19th \$100,000.00 national and school awards of Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge, it was announced today by Foundation President, Dr. Kenneth D. Wells.

Justice Grimson will join with fourteen state supreme court jurists and seventeen executive officers of national patriotic, veterans' and service organizations comprising the jury which convenes at the Foundation Valley Forge national headquarters November 24.

The Jury, under the non-voting chairmanship of Dr. Dudley Pendleton Gaines, President of Washington and Lee University, will select individuals, organizations, and schools throughout the country to receive cash and medal honors for their work in helping bring about a better understanding of the American Way of Life through patriotic projects, program expressions, and other efforts during 1956.

Emile Walters Paints in Greenland

An interesting account of the tour of Greenland on a painting assignment by **Emile Walters**, eminent Icelandic artist, is contained in the July 15 edition of The Nab News, official Class 2 United States Air Force newspaper published bi-weekly by and for United States military and civilian personnel in Greenland.

Headed "Famous Artist Emile Walters Paints Fjord," the Nab News account follows:

Residents of Tunugliarfik Fjord are soon to be captured on the canvass's of

a world renowned artist—Mr. Emile Walters, who is visiting this area to tell the story of early North American colonization through paintings of natural landscapes and Viking ruins in this historic vicinity.

His visit here is sponsored by the American-Scandinavian Foundation in New York City and assisted by the United States Air Force.

Mr. Walters' skill in adapting natural objects and forces to visions in color is well known and that he is proficient in his art is attested to by the

fact that his works are displayed in no less than 28 museums and art galleries throughout the world. He is represented in many private collections of importance also and is the recipient of distinguished national and international honors.

Tunugliarfik Fjord, as seen from Karsiarssuak village has been captured by him on a recent visit there in the company of Major Karl K. Kirkegaard, Royal Danish Air Force, who is the liaison officer for the Danish government here.

Artist Walters' interest in weather conditions and geological structures is shown by some of the titles of his paintings. "The Storm" and "Morning Light" (University of Saskatchewan), "Winter Haze" (Museum of Rouen, France), "Sunset at Legarflpot" (Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco) and four paintings "The Seasons" (National Museum of Iceland, Reykjavik).

He spent last summer in Iceland sponsored by the US State Department where he painted the birthplace of the early North American colonist and explorer, Eric the Red. Also Thorfinns Karlsefnis who colonized America for 3 years in the neighborhood of the present state of Massachusetts, according to some present day historians.

While there Mr. Walters painted and lived in those areas that held background interest on the story of American exploration by the Vikings.

This work by Mr. Walters is the fulfillment of an early dream of his to actually see and paint the landscapes that the explorers of early times in the Northern hemisphere saw. The State Department of the United States backed his trip to Iceland in the summer of 1955.

This year the American-Scandinavian Foundation is sponsoring his studies and painting here in the southern Greenland area as an extension of his effort to put on canvas the story of the wanderings and discoveries of the Viking of yesteryear.

While Greenland's history is generally recognized as starting in the 16th century with the advent of Christian missionaries the first Viking—Eric the Red settled right here on Tunugliarfik Fjord. He built his home, Brutahild, in what is now the village of Karsiarssuak which is across the fjord from BW-1.

Mr. Walters' studies and paintings will carry him along the coast of Greenland, then to Labrador, down to Newfoundland, and then into the upper coastal regions of the United States and Canada.

In the future it is planned to actually follow the over-seas and land routes of the early explorers and through the use of scientific observations recreate the voyage of these early adventurers and men of vision from the Scandinavian countries who fearlessly explored this inhospitable northland of Boreas Rex, god of the northwind.



NEWS SUMMARY

Peter D. Curry of Winnipeg has been appointed to the Board of Governors of the University of Manitoba. His mother, the late Mrs. Bertha Curry, was Icelandic. She spent the early part of her life in Winnipeg but a number of years ago moved to San Diego, California where she died.

Peter Curry served on the Winnipeg School Board for some years and was Chairman of the Board for one term. An accountant by profession, Mr. Curry is the head of Peter D. Curry & Co. Ltd., investment dealers and besides is on the directorate of a number of financial and commercial corporations.



Mrs. Lara Thordarson of Vancouver, B. C., recently returned to her home there after a two-year stay in Alexandria, Egypt. She was one of three Canadian graduate nurses appointed by the United Nations World Health Organization to organize and establish a school of nursing at the University of Alexandria.

Miss Thordarson is a graduate of St. Boniface Hospital, St. Boniface, Man. Later she taught nursing at the University of Toronto and is now employed by the Metropolitan Health Committee of Vancouver.

In Egypt, she said, nursing education was limited and its prestige very low. It was, therefore, necessary for Miss Thordarson and other directors, besides organizing and teaching, to try to improve the efficiency of nursing and raise the prestige of the profession, not only among the students, but among the public at large. Their aim was also to attract students from other

Arabian countries such as Iraq, Jordan, Syria and the Sudan. Miss Thordarson is confident that their work will bring good results. She found the Egyptian student nurses interested and co-operative.

Miss Thordarson is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Th. Thordarson of Vancouver.



Dr. Thordur Thordarson, professor at the Agricultural college at Fargo, North Dakota, with Mrs. Thordarson spent the past summer in Iceland where he acted in an advisory capacity for the Icelandic Government Dept. of Agriculture on agricultural and related matters, with special emphasis on farm youth club work and organization. While in Iceland he lectured at the University of Iceland in Reykjavik.



The Embassy of Iceland in Washington, D.C., ordered 100 copies of the article "Golden Age Literature of Iceland" by **Hjalmur F. Danielson**, which appeared in the Icelandic Canadian magazine and the State Department. Iceland also ordered 200 copies for distribution. Mr. Danielson had the articles printed separately and sold them at cost price.



The twin brothers, **Kenneth** and **Robert**, sons of Dr. and Mrs. P. H. Thorlakson of Winnipeg, have recently returned with their families from London, England, where they have been taking post graduate studies in surgery for the past five years, each

having been awarded a fellowship by the Royal College of Surgeons in England. Doctors Kenneth and Robert are now associates of the Winnipeg Clinic.



Baldur Thorsteinsson, an official of the government forestry department in Iceland, made a tour of Alaska this fall to study forest growth and development there. Mr. Thorsteinsson, who travelled by air, returned from the north early in November and stopped off at Winnipeg for a four-day visit prior to continuing on to Ottawa and thence to Iceland.



Heimskringla, one of the first Icelandic weeklies to be published in

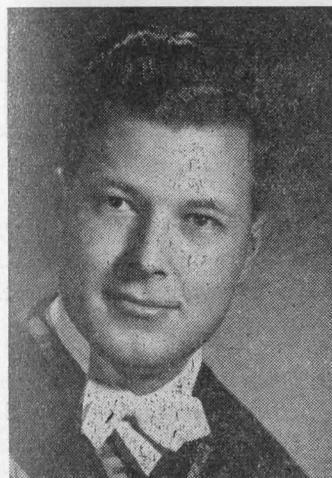
North America, celebrated its seventieth anniversary on October 3rd, 1956. The occasion was commemorated with a special issue of the paper. Congratulations and good wishes were received from far and near. Mr. Stefan Einarson has been editor for the past 31 years.



In an article in the last issue of **The Icelandic Canadian** concerning Miss Fern Olson through error in publication the names of her parents and grandparents were not clearly indicated. Miss Olson is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W. T. Olson of Coaldale, Alta., and granddaughter of Mr. and Mrs. S. B. Olson of Vancouver, B.C. The Icelandic Canadian regrets the error.

SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

RESEARCH SCHOLARSHIP WON BY DR P. S. VALBERG



Dr. P. S. Valberg, who graduated in 1954 from Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario with a brilliant record

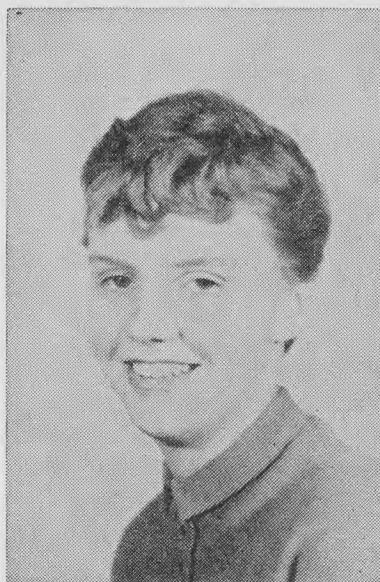
of awards and scholarships,* including the medal in internal medicine, has been awarded a \$4000.00 research fellowship by the Canadian Life Insurance Officers' Association. This fellowship is to assist Dr. Valberg in his studies in biochemistry at Queen's University.

Dr. Valberg spent his first post-graduate year at Regina General Hospital and last summer completed a year in the Department of internal medicine at the Kingston General Hospital.

Dr. Valberg's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Valberg, who hail from the Churchbridge district in Saskatchewan now reside in Regina. Dr. Valberg married the former Barbara Lolhurst of Moose Jaw. They have one son.

* See Icel. Can, Autumn 1954.

**ROSEMARY JOHNSON
RECEIVES RECOGNITION**



Rosemary Johnson of Winnipeg, at the age of 13 and a Grade IX pupil in Gordon Bell High School last year, wrote a six-page story for her school which has now received the distinction of appearing in a publication called "First Flowering"—a selection of Prose and Poetry by the youth of Canada and published by Kingswood House, Toronto, Ontario.

Early in May, 1956, 7,000 posters in English and French were sent out to High Schools all over Canada, asking for contributions from students. The editors, Messrs. Anthony Frisch and John Harasti received 5,300 contributions and their selections are contained in a book of 210 pages.

Rosemary is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jón Johnson, 735 Home St.

★

**PHYLLIS THORDIS JOHNSON
WINS SCHOLASTIC HONOR**

Phyllis Thordis Johnson was selected as winner of the Governor-General's Medal at the Daniel McIntyre Col-

legiate Institute, Winnipeg, for 1956. This award, together with a bursary, was presented to her at a ceremony on Thursday, October 25th, 1956.

During 1955 Phyllis took an active part in school activities, participated in all choir work, was member of the room executive and a delegate to the United Nations Seminar.

In 1956 she was a member of the festival choir, served on her room executive, was a delegate to the Red Cross conference, acted as a reporter



Phyllis Thordis Johnson

for the school newspaper, and was editor of the school magazine.

Outside of school Phyllis took an important part in all church youth activities of the First Lutheran Church in Winnipeg besides being a member of the choir, and a Sunday School teacher. She was also president of the Canadian Girls in Training at St. Paul's United Church.

Phyllis is outstanding in her scholastic work. Although just 16 years old she is now taking Grade 12 at Dania

McIntyre Collegiate and plans to attend the University of Manitoba during the next three years.

Jacqueline Hansina Johnson graduated from the University of Manitoba with a Bachelor of Arts degree in May, 1956, with an excellent standing.

Through her high school years Jacqueline was an honor student at Daniel McIntyre Collegiate and showed scholastic ability all through her school years.

She now holds a responsible position with the Great West Life Assurance Company in Winnipeg.

Phyllis and Jacqueline are daughters of Walter and Sigridur (nee Erlandson) Johnson, Ste 8, Elaine Court, Winnipeg.



JOHN K. MARTEINSON AWARDED SCHOLARSHIPS

John K. Marteinson, a second year student in Arts at the University of Manitoba was awarded the Gudrun Norman Scholarship of \$100.00 for 1956, The Manitoba Scholarship of \$400.00, and the Langruth Legion Scholarship of \$100.00. He also won the Langruth Legion Scholarship of \$100.00 in 1955.

This brilliant scholar was born at

Langruth, Manitoba on February 14, 1939 and attended the Langruth Elementary and High School.

John is the son of Jón and Laufey (nee Fjelsted) Marteinsson of Langruth.



DUNCAN THOMAS McWHIRTER WINS FURTHER LAURELS

Duncan Thomas McWhirter, a distinguished scholar mentioned in our magazine before (Winter 1954) has again added to the many laurels he has received since entering University College in the University of Toronto. The latest is a \$300.00 bursary awarded by University College to an honor student.

As a second year honor student in Political Science and Economics at the University of Toronto in 1955, Duncan was awarded two bursaries: Council of University College bursary of \$250.00 and a Dundill Wilson Residence bursary of \$150.00.

Duncan is now in his third year at the University of Toronto and is majoring in modern history.

Duncan is the son of Mr. and Mrs. R. J. McWhirter, 742 Bessie Avenue, Winnipeg. His mother Gudrun is the daughter of Soffia and the late Thomas Benjaminson of Lundar, Manitoba.

Canadian Pacific Airlines has requested permission from the Federal Government to extend its Toronto-Mexico air service to Lisbon, Portugal. If permission is granted, the new service will link Latin America with Europe via Canada, blaze a new travel trail across the Atlantic, and draw an increasing flow of Mexican traffic over the Canadian line. Flying time over the 5,800-mile Mexico-Toronto-Montreal-Lisbon route would be less than 23 hours.

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GENERAL BURNS: Warrior-Diplomatist

The man with the touchiest diplomatic job in the world today is a stocky, eagle-nosed Canadian professional soldier charged with the responsibility of bringing some semblance of peace and order to the Middle East.

Few persons could have envied Major-General Edson L. M. Burns his job as chief of the United Nations armistice mission in Palestine over the past two and a half years. Fewer still will

The Saskatchewan Icelanders

A Strand of the Canadian Fabric
Extracts from reviews:

"Judge Walter Lindal's substantial volume is a worthy monument to the spirit of a great racial community". —Dr. Watson Kirkconnell in University of Toronto Quarterly.

"The book will have a place of honor in my *Canadiana*". —Grant MacEwan, M.L.A. Calgary.

"A sub-title to Judge Lindal's book is 'A Strand of the Canadian Fabric'. And apt it is, for he shows how the influences and contributions of the Icelanders have become a vital part of Canada's history." —The Windsor Star.

"By the miracle of poetic inheritance your beautiful style alone makes for easy reading." —Laura Goodman Salverson.

A small balance of bound copies is left for sale at \$4.00 by

DAVID BJORNSSON
763 BANNING ST. WPG. 3, MAN.

envy him the task of commanding the United Nations "police force" in the Suez Canal zone.

Here is an army that really isn't an army but has no more weapons, if indeed as many, as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. It's men speak in variety of tongues, thus creating complication in command. The authority of this army is at best moral, worst nebulous and it is accepted on

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as the lesser of two evils by the Egyptians.

Who is this man who has taken on this difficult, frustrating and thankless task?

Edson Louis Millard Burns was born in Westmount, Que., a suburb of Montreal, 59 years ago and was educated at Lower Canada College in Montreal and Royal Military College at Kingston, Ont. In the first World War he went to France with the Royal Canadian Engineers, was wounded and won the Military Cross for gallantry.

He became the youngest staff captain in the Canadian Expeditionary Force and was decorated once more, for developing new techniques in aerial photography.

During the Second World War he had a distinguished career as brigade commander, divisional commander and finally commander of an army corps. He directed the First Canadian Corps during the Italian campaign, one of the most difficult and exacting field jobs among the Allied forces.

As commander of the armistice mission striving to bring peace between Israel and the surrounding Arab states, General Burns has had to demonstrate the patience of Job, the firmness of Moses and the flexible wisdom of Solomon. He has had to make decisions that displeased one side, or both. His

Headquarters were on a hill outside Jerusalem, in No-Man's Land. This is a lonely spot, difficult and dangerous to enter. Burns stayed there, however, rather than seek greater comfort in either Israeli or Arab territory. This, to him, was a symbol of his impartiality.

All this patience, skill and inner strength will be needed amid the bitterness of Suez.



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